

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

Sub. at 1. A system for determining eligibility by a dental care provider for determining plan design by  
5 a dental care provider and for recording utilization of benefits by a dental care provider for a participant comprising:

- at least one computer, each such at least one computer having at least one data storage means, at least one input means, and at least one output means, the at least one computer having participant data stored on the data storage means pertaining to a participant;

10 - means associated with the at least one computer for determining eligibility of the participant; and

- means associated with the at least one computer for recording utilization of benefits by the dental care provider.

15 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the at least one computer comprises a plurality of computers being linked to define a network

20 3. The system of claim 2 wherein the plurality of computers are linked by way of the world wide web.

Sub. B3 25 The system of claim 1 wherein the eligibility determining means comprises:

- means for inputting a participant identifier;

- means for inputting a particular procedure necessitated by a participant;

- means for searching the participant data stored in the at least one data storage means for the participants identifier;

- means for providing the participant stored data pertaining to the participant identifier to the output means of the at least one computer, to, in turn, provide data as to the eligibility of a participant for a particular procedure.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the participant identifier comprises at least one of the group consisting of: social security number, last name, first name, carrier and date of birth.

SUB E2/ 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the means for inputting a particular procedure necessitated by a participant comprises means for inputting at least a procedure code, a tooth identification, and a positional identification as applicable to said procedure.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein the benefit utilization recording means comprises means for creating a utilization record.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein the benefit utilization recording means comprises means for accessing at least one created utilization record.

9. The system of claim 7 wherein the utilization record includes an identification of the dental care provider, an identification of the participant, and the identification of the procedure necessitated by the participant.

10. The system of claim 1 further including means for selecting the operation of one of the verification means and the utilization recordation means.

11. The system of claim 1 further including means for permitting only a select group of predetermined operators to utilize the system.

12. The system of claim 1 further including means for updating the participant data stored on the data storage means of the at least one computer of the system.

13. A method for providing information to dental care providers regarding a participant comprising the steps of:

- determining eligibility of the participant comprising the steps of:

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- inputting an identifier data pertaining to at least one participant as input;
- searching for the identifier data in said participant data of a data storage means;
- providing output in the form of data pertaining to the eligibility of the at least one participant with respect to at least one procedure necessitated by the at least one participant, and

- recording the utilization of benefits by way of a procedure by the dental care provider comprising the steps of:

- inputting an identifier data pertaining to at least one participant as input; and
- inputting a preformed procedure data.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of: accessing the inputted performed procedure data in real time.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of: updating at least a portion of the data pertaining to the eligibility of the at least one participant, wherein, the step of providing output of such data occurs in real time.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of inputting an identifier comprises the step of:  
- inputting at least one of a social security number, a last name, a first name and a date of birth.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of inputting data pertaining to a procedure comprises the step of: inputting at least one procedure code pertaining to a desired procedure.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of inputting data pertaining to a procedure comprises the steps of:

- inputting at least one procedure code pertaining to a desired dental procedure;
- inputting an identification of the tooth undergoing the desired dental procedure;
- inputting the identification of the location of the tooth undergoing the desired dental

procedure.

19. A method for establishing a network for the administration of coverage to a dental care provider comprising the steps of:

- providing a plurality of computers;
- linking the computers to form a network;
- storing data pertaining to a participant and to a coverage plan pertaining to the participant;

and

- providing access to the data of the participant from at least one of the plurality of computers, to in turn, facilitate at least one of:

- determining the eligibility of the participant for a particular procedure; and
- recording the utilization of participant benefits by the dental care provider to form utilization records.

20. The method of claim 19 further including the step of updating the data so as to provide accurate data in real time.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of linking the computers comprises the step of linking the computers by way of the world wide web.

22. The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of requiring a login prior to providing access to the data of the participant, to, in turn, maintain the security of the data.

23. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of providing access further includes the step of providing access to facilitate access to completed utilization records.